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AN
EPISTLE
TO
FRIENDS
IN
IRELAND.

By CATHARINE PHILLIPS.



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T O
F R I E N D S
I N
I R E L A N D.

DEAR FRIENDS,

AS I have lately paid an exercising visit, in Gospel Love, to most of the meetings of Friends in your nation, in the course whereof, the states of many were clearly pointed out, and the Love of God renewedly manifested; and, being desirous that the favour thereof may so rest upon the spirits of those visited, as to produce fruits answerable to the labour bestowed, and also, that those who were not sharers in this favour may be excited to a discharge of their duty, I am engaged, I hope, in a degree of the same love, to endeavour, in part, to sum up the testimony I have had to bear amongst you, and recommend it to your attentive consideration.

AND, in the first place, I wish it may be esteemed an instance of peculiar favour and condescension, that the Lord is instrumentally visiting his church, and baptising his servants into the several states therein, in order that they may be qualified to sympathise with the oppressed, strengthen the weak, and rouse the indolent and inattentive

to their duty : and, if such mercies are slighted by any, it will certainly add to their condemnation ; and having been favoured with the means of working out their souls' salvation, and called to improve their time and talent to that important end, they will be left without excuse.

WHEN ministry proceeds from the right spring, 'tis a very awful thing to be ministered unto :—and it has been, at times, so evidently in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, that all might be sensible that it is not of men but of God, who trieth the heart and manifesteth the state thereof to his servants :—therefore, such who are thus ministered unto, should consider themselves as spoken to by Him through his ministers, who, as ambassadors for him, beseech the people to be reconciled to him :—and, as I humbly hope myself and dear companion in gospel labour, have (according to our measure) been engaged thus to minister amongst you, we may say with the Apostle, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to those who are lost, whose eyes the god of this world hath so blinded, that they cannot perceive the mercy of God in these precious visitations.

BUT, dear Friends, as many of you have been affected with a sense of his Love to your souls, I beseech you, let it not be thus manifested in vain ; but, agreeable to our earnest exhortation, so attend to the manifestation of his Holy Spirit in your hearts, as everlastingly to profit thereby.—From our beginning as a people, we have been peculiarly engaged to testify that *the Grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, and teacheth to deny ungodliness and the world's lusts,*

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lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world:—and the travel of my spirit hath been, that the members of our society may not rest in a formal profession of faith in this grace, but become so experimentally acquainted therewith, as the great change from the state of fallen nature to that of grace may be effected thereby; without which, (may it be deeply impressed upon every mind,) we cannot be accepted of God through his beloved Son, who has declared that, unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.—And why so?—but because, in his natural state, he has not dispositions of mind adequate to the purity of that kingdom; for, flesh and blood (with the desires natural thereto) cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.—It should therefore, become our most earnest engagement that, as we have borne the image of the earthly nature, we may also bear that of the heavenly.—But, under a sorrowful sense that many amongst you are strangers to, or greatly deficient in, this great and necessary work, I have been concerned to press it home upon them to work, whilst it is called to-day, in making their calling and election sure; because time flies swiftly; and, if it should terminate before this work is accomplished, the close will be attended with a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation which will hereafter be revealed.

Now, dear Friends, let not these important truths be disregarded; but awfully consider them; and be steadily concerned that, when you shall be called to an account of your stewardship, you may *be found ready*:—for, unto each of us is given Grace, according to the measure of the gift of God,

God, who, having wisely dispensed unto us gifts different, 'tis expected we should make an improvement of the various talents we are intrusted with, agreeable to our blessed Saviour's doctrine, Math. xxv. and 15, &c. whereby I wish you to try yourselves, that you may see what you have been doing with your lord's money, which if you do, probably some may see they have been *hiding it in the earth*: although they have been cloathing themselves with a fair outside-profession and shew of religion, yet the Seed of the Kingdom, the Grace of God, is oppressed under the cares of this world, and the possessions thereof, which have so engrossed their affections, that the Love of the Father is not in them; and the state of some of these is the more lamentable and dangerous, because, in some former period of their lives, they have been favoured with the tendering impressions of divine Love and Life when they beheld with desire the *celestial glory*, unto which if they had kept a single eye, they would have been *changed by the operation of the divine Spirit, until they had been renewed up in the Image of God*, and so have been *furnished unto every good work*: but suffering themselves to be allured by the terrestrial glory, the prospect of their becoming fruitful in righteousness has been blasted; and, preferring earthly to heavenly treasure, as they have increased in the first, they have lost that which is infinitely more valuable, and, being settled down in a formal state, are incapable of coming up livingly into any active service for God in his church; for, those who act in the discipline, as well as the ministry, should be men and women fearing God and hating Covetousness.—Had the middle-aged and more advanced in life amongst you retained the heavenly
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ly dew, which once rested on their spirits, how many in the different stations in the church might have stood in the dignity and authority of Truth, and, to use the expression of the Prophet, *been as saviours on mount Sion, who should judge the mount of Esau*, or have been qualified to feed the Lord's sheep and lambs?—when alas! now the children who are weak ask bread, and there are not, in some places, any to dispense it.—Their state requires instruction and fatherly care; but those around them, who from their outward appearance seem to be somewhat, are incapable to administer it.—My spirit, in tender compassion and sympathy, has lamented over the youth, many of whom are left as without watchers over them, exposed to the temptations of a subtle enemy, who has carried away the minds of some into the vanities and pleasures of this wicked world, and, by his insinuations and reasonings, so darkened their understandings, that they lightly esteem the principles of Truth, and, by a conformity to the world and its manners, seek its friendships, which are enmity with God; because they stand in contrariety to the cross of Christ.—With some of these, as well as with some more advanced in age, I fear we have unavailingly laboured; who, preferring lying vanities to their souls' mercies, appear determined to walk in the way of their own hearts and sight of their own eyes, asking counsel of their passions, and making their earthly wisdom the rule of their conduct: but let them know that, for so doing, God will bring them to Judgement.—The time is hastening when the laughter of these will be changed into mourning; for they will see that it has been an evil thing, and is very bitter in its consequences, for them to have forsaken

faken the Lord, and that his fear has not been in them.—How many, by swerving from the holy commandment, and taking the government of themselves, have mingled for themselves a bitter cup in this life, as well as neglected to lay the foundation for a better hope when time shall terminate?—

DEARLY beloved youth, whose minds are tender, may others' harms make you beware; and may you prize the day of the Lord's merciful Visitation, and cherish those scruples, which, by the In-shinings of his Light, are raised in your minds; so will you be led to seek for strength, to take up the Cross to your natural inclinations and follow Christ, who, as in all things he was subject to the will of his Father, was a perfect example to us:—and, did the consideration how much he suffered for us, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God, bear due weight with us, it would excite us to follow him in the same self-denying path, which becomes the more easy, the more it is travelled in; because it is attended with true peace. Were our youth resigned to walk therein, they would become devoted *to*, and fitted *for* the Lord's service, so as to succeed those who have been valiant for the Truth; and we, as a people, should yet become the Beauty of Nations: for, it appears evident, from the many Divine Visitations wherewith we are favoured, that the Lord, who gathered us and formed us a people to his Praise, seeks our restoration to purity and zeal for the Honour of his Name: and, although some may so resist his Grace against themselves, as to scatter from us, I hope others will more fully submit to the government of the Shepherd of Israel; and,

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and, rejoicing in him as their Leader and Feeder, will not be looking out for instrumental helpers, but thankfully acknowledge that he is sufficient for his own work.

DEAR Friends,—let it be your engagement, in your several stations and stages of life, humbly to wait upon the Lord in your publick solemnities, and also at other seasons; that you may experience him a Fountain unsealed for your refreshment and instruction; and, if he speaks reproof, receive it as a token of his Favour; for, whomsoever he loves, he rebukes and chastens, that they may become partakers of his Holiness; and, glorifying him in their bodies and spirits, may be fitted to be glorified with him, when they shall have accomplished the work he has appointed them on earth. These weighty truths will be livingly opened in your understandings, as you live under the influence of the Divine Power; so that you will acknowledge that you need not that any man teach you; and prize the privilege of your education which has pointed to an entire dependance upon him who teaches as never man taught; and under the consideration of his condescending Love, will worship and praise his ever worthy Name: and in this day, wherein he has seen meet in so great a degree to cut off from you instrumental helpers, your silent solemnities will be seasons of renewing of strength and encouragement to trust in him who alone is the sure Helper of his people. The Christian life is a life of inward exercise and watching unto Prayer; in which if all were engaged in our publick meetings, it would preserve from that sleepy spirit, which so frequently prevails over some to their reproach; who would do well to consider

consider how inconsistent this practice is with their high and holy profession of worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth. It is a very awful consideration, that, in assembling under this profession, we present ourselves to the view of him, who beholds the frame of our spirits; and how such must appear in his sight, let them solemnly reflect, and, in a sense of their vileness, abhor themselves as in dust and ashes. I hope some of these will peruse these remarks, and wish they may be instructed thereby; which appeared the more necessary, because it seemed almost impossible, by words, to engage their attention: for, I have with sorrow beheld some so sunk into this state, even whilst the testimony of Truth was declaring, that they could know but a small part of what was delivered. I might forbear to mention with what difficulty a minister who is concerned for the Welfare of such Souls must labour, did I not wish by every motive, to rouse them to a conduct more consistent with the nature of that Spiritual Worship we profess: for there must be a preparedness of heart wrought, to partake of this Holy Communion—we must forsake the Table of Idols before we can be admitted to the Lord's Table:—yea—we must abhor the food wherewith the the Table of Idols is spread, or we cannot relish the Spiritual Dainties of the Lord's House, and be crying, Lord, ever more give us that Bread whereby our souls may be nourished up unto everlasting Life, ---It is not improbable that the drowsiness before-mentioned may, in some, proceed from eating and drinking more than nature requires; this most certainly unfits the mind for spiritual exercises; for, when the body is still, the mind sinks into rest. Under this consideration, it becomes the duty of all to watch, lest their table become a snare to them,
and

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and wine and strong drink be so indulged in their feasts, as to unfit them for Communion with God and the Participation of the New Wine of his Kingdom. And, young people should, especially, be careful not to indulge themselves in the use of much wine, &c. lest the prevalence of custom grow upon them as they advance in years. To the foregoing hints, may be added another practice, which, tho' not general, yet I observed it in one quarter, and is very unbecoming a religious assembly, and that is the custom of chewing Tobacco. May those who thus indulge themselves reflect, how contrary this conduct and disposition of mind are to the offering to the Lord the sacrifices of broken hearts and contrite spirits which tremble at his Word, which, in our beginning as a people, were conspicuous in our assemblies. To be temperate in all things is a great attainment; and truly christian minds will press after it: and, if the Divine Benefactor has dispensed plenty of temporal good, such will be concerned that they may use the world to his honour, and not abuse it by consuming it upon their lusts, but may feel their hearts influenced to do good, and communicate to the wants of their fellow-creatures; remembering that with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

DEAR Friends, you who have the cause of Truth at heart, and are desirous that, as the Lord's approved people, we may be arrayed with the beautiful garments of righteousness, spare not those in judgment, who by any immoral practices, bring a reproach on our high and holy profession; but, after due admonition and christian waiting for their reformation, if they continue therein, set them without the camp for the clearing the testimony of Truth,

Truth, and that others may learn to fear. If we were a clean spiritually-minded people, our numbers would be more likely to increase; for sincere seeking minds would be turned towards us, and, beholding our chaste conversation coupled with the Fear of God, might be led to settle under the immediate teaching of his Spirit: for, to behold these, who have not frequent instrumental teaching, well instructed to his kingdom, must have a striking influence upon truly considerate minds; who may conclude that these are taught of the Lord, or they could not be thus established in righteousness. So that, in bearing a silent uniform testimony, in spirit and conduct, to the Truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, these are convincing teachers of righteousness to their neighbours. Had all the professors of Truth been thus concerned that their lights might shine before men, I believe that the principles and testimonies committed to us had gained more ground amongst mankind; many would have seen their consistency with the Gospel dispensation, and have acknowledged that, blessed were that people, who were thus divinely instructed. But, alas, many have swerved from the holy commandment, from the law and the testimonies, to their reproach amongst men, as well as condemnation before God; and some, who may appear in an outward shew to bear them, are doing their works to be seen of men, rather than in true faithfulness to Him. I therefore beseech you, search yourselves, and know what spirits you are of; for it is impossible to impose upon Him, before whose Tribunal we must all appear, and from Him receive a reward according to our works. If you keep to Truth, it will preserve you from the many condemnable practices which are in the world, and bring you up in the several
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branches of our Christian testimony in true zeal and integrity of heart towards God ; so that the language of your conduct to attentive minds will be, follow us, as we follow Christ.

ALTHOUGH I have been led thus closely to point out the states of the careless and backsliders, I am not insensible that there is a living exercised remnant amongst you, who are secretly lamenting the failures of others in duty, and adopting the language of the Lord's exercised prophet, *Hear, we beseech thee, O Lord God of Hosts, by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?* My beloved Friends, he who raised us up to be a people, is able to strengthen us : and, as it is evident his love is towards us, and his power is operating upon individuals, in order to form them for his service, may your minds be stayed upon him, in hope that he will continue to visit his people, and have mercy on his heritage : so that the waste places shall rejoice ; because life and verdure will appear, where withering and death have sorrowfully been visible. I have been comforted with the hope that the Lord will not suffer us to be laid waste, as a people ; but is on his way for our help, and will gather some, who have scattered from him, in pursuit of these things which cannot satisfy the immortal Spirit, who seeing their own loss will look back towards Zion with *weeping and lamentation*, which will make way for their *return with songs of praise and everlasting joy upon their heads* ; who, being redeemed from that bondage to that god of this world under which they had groaned, will become zealous for the Law and those Testimonies, which, in the darkness of their imaginations, they had once despised. May the living, therefore, endeavour to possess their souls

souls in patience ; so will they witness a renewal of strength, and some be enabled to labour for the help of others, watching over them in love, and manifesting that charity, which, tho' it suffereth long, and is kind, will not suffer sin upon a brother without reproof : and, may these, who are thus laboured with, consider the mercy of God thus manifested ; and, under a sense that love to their souls is the prevailing motive to our Christian labours, both in public ministry, and private admonition, accept thankfully those endeavours for their reformation, and be prevailed upon to seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near, to favour them with strength to forsake the path of error and wickedness, and walk in that of holiness, which alone leadeth to everlasting life.

I HAVE felt an engagement for those who have been gathered to us from other religious professions, that they may be settled upon the ancient foundation, and, being rooted and grounded in the faith, may know the Love of God so shed abroad in their hearts, as that thereby they may be influenced to serve him, and preserved living members of Christ to the end of time. Remember, 'tis not enough to be engrafted into him ; you must abide in him, and he in you ; or you will become as withered branches, and as such cast forth, being subjects for judgment : and, so much the heavier is your condemnation like to be, for having known the Truth. But if you abide in Him, and his Word abide in you, ye will glorify your heavenly Father, by bringing forth much fruit. It may with sorrow be observed, that some, who have been added to us by conviction, have not stood their ground

ground in the simplicity of Truth ; tho' they have been convinced of the principle, they have not lived strictly under its direction ; as probably, some may have sustained loss, by looking out at such as have had their education amongst us, who are taking liberties contrary to the pure rule of the Lord's Spirit, whose manners they may imitate and so settle down too much in the same spirit, and like as the prophet describes the state of Ephraim are as *a cake not turned*, that is, but half changed in spirit and conduct : Dear friends, let it be your concern to eye that Divine Leader in whom you have believed, and follow no man further than he follows Christ. Suffer not your minds to be staggered by the conduct and spirit of some who are under the profession of Truth ; but consider that they as well as others are in the First Nature, until they submit to that Divine Power which can work the necessary change of heart ; and, therefore, will naturally bring forth fruits agreeable thereto ; and although we must acknowledge such as members of our society, by birthright, they are not in a state of strict communion with the faithful : nevertheless, we must exercise charity towards them, and wait for their being brought into the sheep fold through the sanctifying operation of His Spirit, who has declared Himself the Door, as well as the Good Shepherd, under whose government, if you settle, you will experience a going in, and out, and find pasture ; when those may inhabit the parched places of the wilderness ; the sense of whose state leads me to remark to them, that a Profession *of* without a Possession *in* the Truth will avail them nothing ; tho' 'tis certainly to be prized ; as thereby we are in the way of receiving right instruction from our youth up.

Now

Now, dear Friends, as the end proposed by my thus reviving in your remembrance some of these truths, I have been concerned in Gospel Love to testify of, is, that all may seek after the instruction and aid of that Holy Spirit we profess to believe it necessary to be guided by. I entreat you to let it have its due weight, and not be read, as many admonitions of the like kind are, without making an application of what is communicated; but, let such as read enquire what remarks may suit their states: so will the labour of love I have been engaged in have the desired effect; which is, that Friends, in their respective stations, may be built up in the most holy Faith, and in those things which truly edify; that our Zion may arise and shake herself from the dust of the earth, and put on her beautiful garments as in days of old; so shall we conspicuously appear a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy and peculiar people, who shall shew forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into his marvellous Light.

With the salutation of true Love,

I remain your affectionate Friend,

Redruth in Cornwall, the 22d
of 10th Month, 1776.

CATHARINE PHILLIPS.

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